

ANTI-BULLYING & CYBER-BULLYING POLICY 2025 – 2026

THIS POLICY INCLUDES EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Policy Author:	Deputy Head Pastoral – Grace Partridge
Date reviewed by author:	September 2025
Next review date:	September 2026

Governor sign – off		
Governor: Nick Creed	Date:	24/02/2026

1. Introduction

- This policy takes account of:
- KCSIE, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2025
- DfE Guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017
- DfE advice for Parents and Carers on Cyberbullying Nov 2014
- DfE Advice for Headteachers and School Staff on Cyberbullying 2014
- Pennthorpe School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Pennthorpe School Behaviour Management and Sanctions Policy
- Pennthorpe School Online Safety Policy

2. Policy Aims

Pennthorpe has a ZERO TOLERANCE approach to bullying or cyber-bullying.

- The school is a caring community in which all members are actively encouraged to respect others and develop interpersonal skills with all those with whom they have contact.
- We aim to be a supportive, friendly and safe environment which promotes good behaviour and respect for all of our pupils with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils and celebrations of success.
- Bullying is unacceptable behaviour and will not be condoned either by staff or pupils at our school.
- When bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to report it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. It should also be acknowledged that the seriousness of bullying, both physical and emotional, can cause psychological damage.
- All incidences of bullying or unkindness are taken seriously and staff are trained and expected to deal with them expediently.
- Anyone who knows that bullying is taking place is expected to tell a member of the teaching staff. This applies to all, the witness, the bully and the victim. Everyone bears that responsibility to the school and the people in it.

3. Responsibilities of the School

Regularly monitors and reviews the Anti-Bullying & Cyber-Bullying Policy;

- Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.

- Ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively, that pupils feel safe to learn, and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Educate pupils about bullying and cyber-bullying through PSHEE, Huddles, projects, drama, stories literature, Anti-Bullying Spotlight Week and discussion avoiding prejudice-based language.
- Reports back to parents or carers regarding our concerns of bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents usually work with the school to uphold the Anti-Bullying & Cyber-Bullying Policy.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilises support from relevant organisations when appropriate.

The term “staff” includes temporary, peripatetic, supply teaching staff and all support staff from all areas of the school including administration and medical, catering, grounds and gardens, etc. Sports coaches, gap students, drama teachers and volunteers also form part of this group.

4. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group that is repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups.

Bullying is the willful, conscious desire to embarrass, hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging and electronic messaging (including through web-sites, social networking sites and Instant Messenger), sending offensive or degrading images by mobile device or via the internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture.
- Bullying related to special educational needs.
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions or disability.
- Bullying related to sexual orientation, gender or homophobia.
- Bullying related to home circumstances or because a child is adopted or is a carer.
- Sexist or sexual bullying.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Cyber bullying (social websites, mobile devices, text messaging, photographs and email).

5. Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact over time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves.

By cyber-bullying, we mean:

- Bullying by electronic media.
- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile devices.
- The use of mobile devices’ cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation.

- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites.
- Using email to message others.
- Hijacking/cloning email accounts.
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms to include Facebook, YouTube, Rate my teacher, Instagram, Teams or Snapchat.
- Sexting/Shared Images - primarily involves the sending and receiving of nudes or semi-nudes photos or videos via mobile devices.

Legal Implications

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

6. Sign and Symptoms of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Does not want to go on the school bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares, or uncharacteristic bed-wetting
- Feels ill in the morning or has repeated sleepless nights
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or go missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Child comes home starving (not going to lunch)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating or has repeated tummy aches at mealtimes
- Is frightened to say what is wrong, becomes less communicative or forthcoming about school
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile devices

- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Becomes teary for no apparent reason
- Changes friendship groups, or becoming less engaged in class activities

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

7. Prevent and Identifying Bullying

All staff should be aware that children can bully and abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of bullying (including child-on-child abuse) and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in school it does not mean bullying (including child-on-child abuse) is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy).

Pennthorpe has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and abuse. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. It is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

The school will:

- Aim to prevent bullying and work to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.
- Have clear policies communicated to all parents, pupils and staff and create an environment of good behaviour and rapport.
- Work with teaching staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice.
- Take bullying on the basis of protected characteristics, particularly seriously.
- Ensure both staff and pupils are aware of the seriousness of bullying, both physical and emotional, and the consequences of ignoring it. This can cause psychological damage and potentially lead to suicide. This will be emphasised during anti-bullying training for all staff including those new to the School and Early Career Teachers.
- Implement disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of an incident, and which convey an effect, in line with the ‘Behavioural Management and Sanctions Policy’.
- Ensure that the entire community is aware that criminal laws exist which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.
- Provide opportunities to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills, including their resilience. This would include targeted input during PSHEE sessions and through Huddles, news items, charitable drives, use of case studies or projects in English and Drama, etc. A difference between people and the importance of highlighting prejudice-based language is key.

- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the modelling of behaviour.

Train all staff to identify bullying, understand the principles of and follow school policy and procedures on bullying. Staff will understand the legal responsibilities; the action required to resolve and present problems and be aware of sources of support available. Where applicable, specialised skills are appointed to better understand the needs of our pupils.

This approach is centred on safeguarding the child and ensuring their welfare through the investigation and after the sanction has been served by the bullies. The sensitive and considerate management of the relationship between the bullied and the bully will be of paramount importance.

The reliance of the child on us to get it right must encourage us all to keep communication with the children frequent and open.

8. Involvement of Pupils

The school will:

- Canvas pupils' views on the extent and nature of bullying and cyber-bullying.
- Engage pupils in the termly 'Wellbeing Survey' whereby they can raise issues and concerns.
- Ensure pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying both in and out of school; this includes ensuring they know who to tell. It is more important to report an incident than to worry about who exactly to tell.
- Ensure all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions, which may be applied against those engaging in bullying (see the School's Behavioural Management: Rewards and Sanctions Policy). More so, pupils work within an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff, older pupils and celebration of success.
- Ensure pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Publicise the details of help lines and websites.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied.
- Work with pupils who have been bullied to address the problems they have.

9. Guidance for Pupils

When children encounter behaviour which they find uncomfortable, either involving themselves, their friends or others, they are encouraged to take the following action rather than feeling unhappy or frightened. This applies to bullying both at school and bullying which may have occurred away from school.

They are reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously and that they are safe to report any concerns in school. Pupils will understand that the taking of such action will result in a swift improvement and eventual solution to their situation, not in a worsening of the bullying as is so often feared:

- Don't wait – tell an adult early on.
- Avoid being alone with the bully.

- Refuse to engage – don't reply to nasty taunts or cyber messages.
- Keep a record of what happens and when it happened.

TRUST your teachers and TALK to them. If you believe you or someone else is the victim of bullying or cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible.

- Tell any member of staff. There is no need to feel guilty. Sharing a concern sometimes takes courage but will often save great unhappiness. It doesn't matter who they choose to tell but they might typically choose to tell their form tutor, assistant tutor, class teacher or classroom assistant, a designated Champion or Head of Year. Pupils should also feel able to approach any member of the Senior Management Team directly.
- Tell their parents.
- Tell a friend and discuss strategies.
- In the Prep School, if they feel they cannot talk about the problem, they are encouraged to write down their thoughts and pass them to an adult.
- If they want to talk about the problem to someone outside the school, ask to contact Childline (08001111).
- Pupils are also encouraged to do the following things to help foster a culture that discourages bullying:

Celebrate the efforts and Achievements of others:

- Hold and promote positive attitudes setting helpful examples to others.
- Share problems and air complaints.
- Understand it is a shared responsibility to make playtimes, meals and shared spaces pleasant and sociable.
- Stand up for each other and report situations or behaviours that they feel are hurtful or negative.

Prefects and other senior pupils hold a special responsibility to support others and keep an eye out for bullying or unpleasant behaviour. Training will be provided to all our Year 8 pupils at the start of the school year to help them to recognise, report and monitor incidences of bullying and support victims or dissuade aggressors.

EYFS Children

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They must learn to look after their own possessions and to respect each other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The EYFS practitioner for managing children's behaviour is the Head of EYFS.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful of others. We rarely need to impose sanctions but sometimes we may provide 'time-out' to a child for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally a child may talk to the Head of EYFS, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action, but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed verbally when any significant sanction or reproof is needed as well as the incident being logged in the child's file and, in cases of repeated

instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher and the Head of EYFS and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty. A copy of our Behaviour Management and Sanctions Policy is on our website for parents and their children to read together.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Staff should be familiar with the children who have special educational needs or disabilities within the school and understand that some children with SEN and disabilities may not recognise that they are being bullied, or that their own behaviour may be seen by others as bullying.

10. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Intrinsic in the life of Pennthorpe is the assumption that staff should, by their example of care and concern for others, provide a positive role model to pupils and colleagues.

Staff are encouraged never to trivialise or overlook possible bullying incidents. Staff at Pennthorpe should aim to apply the 5 Rs below in the case of any bullying incident:

Reassure

Any incident of bullying should be acted upon immediately in the first instance to protect the victim from any repetition. Pupils should feel supported and reassured that their problem is being dealt with.

Report

Incidents should then be recorded on an incident form and handed to the Head of EYFS, Head of Years 1 & 2, or Head of Year (Year 3&4, Year 5&6 or Year 7&8), or the Deputy Head Pastoral who will then notify the Head of School and other appropriate members of staff who are pastorally involved with the perpetrator and victim.

Record

Records of all incidents should be logged on the Day Book on Engage, so that patterns can be established. Sanctions and disciplinary actions should be recorded here also.

React

All problems should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort is made to supervise areas where bullying could take place and at times when it is most likely to occur.

Review

It is the responsibility of the Head of Year in the Prep and Class teachers in the Pre-Prep to ensure that all cases are followed up and that progress is monitored. Ongoing situations should be discussed at Pastoral meetings in the Prep and staff meetings in the Pre-Prep or referred to the Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of School.

Staff also have a responsibility to be a part of the ongoing development of a whole school response to bullying. Relevant training will be provided as part of the school's programme of INSET. Every effort should be made to ensure supervision in vulnerable areas where bullying may be more likely to occur:

- Playground duties should be proactive rather than reactive.
- Changing rooms should never be unsupervised.
- Meals should be well supervised and, in the Prep, staff should aim to sit with the pupils whenever possible.
- Vigilance should be shown while pupils are using school transport.

- Behaviour in corridors and queues should be closely monitored.

Staff training is designed to:

- Raise awareness of bullying.
- Ensure the principles of the policy are understood.
- Legal responsibilities are known.
- Action is defined to resolve and prevent problems.
- Sources of support are available.

Strategies:

Strategies planned for dealing with serious individual cases of bullying must be discussed and agreed with the Head of School. Strategies can and will vary according to circumstances and those involved. At Pennthorpe we do not believe that a single 'off the shelf' strategy can effectively address all cases of bullying in its varied forms.

Where appropriate a restorative approach can be approached in dealing with bullying. As such a further 'R' can be included in tackling bullying – REPAIR. Children should be helped in identifying solutions to the problems which may have arisen so that they can repair harm and ensure behavioural patterns are not repeated. In this way, a harmonious approach to resolving conflict can be sought, reinforced in our chapel program so that appropriate behaviour becomes self-regulated.

Sanctions

It should be clear that our primary aim is to end the bullying and not simply to punish the perpetrator, however usually some sanction will be needed. Most sanctions will be aligned to the school's standard Behaviour Management and Sanctions Policy:

- Warnings might be used in minor cases
- A detention would be the standard first response to a clearer cut bullying incident
- In severe cases suspension or exclusion may be an unfortunate but necessary sanction

Involving External Agencies

A bullying incident will be treated as a safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Head of School will in the first instance contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they have not already been alerted to an incident. At this stage, the Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to, and the DSL will make an evaluation of the situation to judge if an External Agency should be contacted. Individual staff may also make direct referrals to external agencies as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring of Effectiveness

Records of all bullying incidents are kept as detailed within the policy. Records are regularly evaluated, specifically following a bullying incident to ensure that the approach adopted was effective and to enable patterns to be identified. The review is conducted by the Deputy Head Pastoral with the support of the Heads of Year. Bullying Incidents are shared with Governors at termly Education and Welfare Committee Meetings to ensure they have oversight of any incidents, actions, patterns and trends.

11. Guidance for Parents

It is vital that the school and parents work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that may be perceived as bullying or cyber-bullying. Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and procedures and how seriously Pennthorpe takes these issues.

Explain the legal implications relating to bullying and cyber-bullying.

Encourage their child to talk to someone they trust at school, reassuring their child about the problem and working with the school will improve the situation.

If parents believe their child is the victim of bullying or cyber-bullying, they should save all offending material and make sure they have all the relevant information before deleting anything.

Parents should contact the school via the Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Head of Year or Deputy Head Pastoral as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with the Head of School and other relevant staff.

The school will:

- Ensure that parents know to contact their child's Form Teacher, the Head of Pre Prep (if required) and Deputy Head Pastoral.
- Ensure parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it.
- Ensure parents are informed of the system of sanctions and rewards and also the process of appeal on expulsion.
- Involve parents and communicate effectively.

This Policy links with a number of other school policies and practices including:

Concerns and Complaints Policy

- Behavioural Management and Sanctions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy

12. Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils should approach the appropriate member of staff outlined in the school's calendar and other school documentation and use the school's Concerns and Complaints procedure if they feel their concerns about bullying (or indeed anything else) are not being addressed properly.

Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

13. Appendix

Appendix A: 'Beating the Bully' Guidance for Pupils

At Pennthorpe we believe that behaving considerately towards one another is essential for a happy school.

- Everyone has a right to be treated with respect by everyone else.
- We expect all members of our school to show concern for one another and treat each other with consideration, sensitivity and tolerance.

Appendix B What is Bullying?

Bullying is the deliberate desire to hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone else, not just once, but repeatedly, over a period of days or weeks.

It may be physical (e.g. kicking), verbal (e.g. teasing), or psychological (e.g. excluding someone from games). Cyber bullying is also something we are taught about in our school. Often people are bullied simply because they are different.

If a person feels threatened or frightened to such an extent that they no longer feel safe or happy at school, then bullying has taken place, and it is up to all of us to stop it.

Appendix C: Where might bullying take place?

Absolutely anywhere, although the one thing you can be pretty certain of is that the bully won't do it when there's an adult watching.

Bullying can happen on the playground, in the changing rooms or cloakrooms, in the corridors between lessons, in the lunch queue or online. It can happen wherever bullies believe they can get away with it. If we all keep our eyes open and report unkind behaviour, we have a better chance of making our school a safer, happier place.

Appendix D: What do we do to stop it from happening?

As a school, we make it absolutely clear that bullying is wrong.

The Pennthorpe community is one that is guided by the Core Values of tolerance, respect, kindness, honesty, resilience and positivity. The unfairness of bullying is something we talk about often, in Huddles, in Form Times and in PSHEE lessons.

Nobody at Pennthorpe can claim they do not know that bullying is wrong, and everyone knows they have a responsibility to stand up against it.

Stopping bullying is something everyone can play a part in.

What do I do if I'm being bullied?

TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT

Sometimes, by ignoring the bully, or by refusing to show your fear or your distress, or perhaps even by confronting the bully and telling him or her what you think, you may be able to stop it yourself. But, even

if you think you might be able to handle the situation yourself, it's always best to talk it over with someone you can trust first.

At school you can talk to your Form Tutor, Assistant Tutor, Head of Year or any other member of staff. You might talk to a prefect, or even just discuss it with a friend. At home, you could talk to your parents or to your brother or sister. Just talking about it, discussing strategies to deal with it, can be a huge help. If you don't feel you can talk about it, you could always write your experiences down on paper. If you want to talk to someone outside of school and family, you can always contact Childline on 08001111. The important thing is to let someone else know what you're going through. But won't it make things worse if I tell?

That's what victims of bullying always fear, and that's why many bullies are allowed to get away with it for far too long. Their victims are frightened to tell because they fear it will make things even worse. Of course, it's exactly what bullies want their victims to think, indeed they rely on it. So don't let anyone, be they a threatening bully or well-meaning friend, persuade you to keep quiet about being bullied. People may tell you 'You'll only make it worse if you tell', but this might be the worst advice you could receive. By talking to someone about it, particularly by talking to an adult about it, you'll be taking the first major step towards making it much better and eventually stopping it altogether. Be brave and speak up. Never suffer in silence.

Appendix E: Whose responsibility is it to stop bullying from happening at Pennthorpe?

It's everybody's responsibility: staff, parents and pupils. Whether we ourselves are being bullied or we see someone else becoming a victim, we know we must be brave enough to act. If we all make it absolutely clear by what we say and by what we do that we won't put up with bullying, then we can stop it happening.

Remember Bullying is WRONG, don't put up with it.